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ABSTRACT

From a preliminary study of two secondary schools, the author of this report hypothesizes that four essential types of networks determine the character of the educational process. The most important of these is the individual teacher's personal field, the egocentric network of relationships growing out of the teacher's own personal interests. The second field, equally egocentric, consists of the relations between a teacher and his or her students. The third, also egocentric, consists of those relations the teacher builds with other staff members to protect his or her teaching style or enrich his or her personal life. The fourth network comprises all the aspects of the entire staff's various field networks that interrelate within the context of the school. The author suggests that the school's true curriculum develops in the egocentric fields where the individual teacher has greatest autonomy, and that effective control of the fourth network is severely limited by the sheer complexity of the interrelationships among the various fields. This concept accounts for the notion of "loose coupling" and suggests further that school effectiveness depends on how students fit into the fields individual teachers develop. (Author/PGD)

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A STUDY OF NETWORKS AMONG PROFESSIONAL STAFFS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract

What is the network of interactions among the staff of secondary schools and how does that network affect the curriculum? Field methods were used to answer these questions in two large comprehensive secondary schools in a metropolitan area. The author divided the term "network" into two parts, the first a field, denoting the ego-centered set of relations around an individual or group; the second, a network, or the sum of all the interactions of a certain kind in a certain place. The concluding model, drawn from the description, contains three parts. The first part is a teacher's individual and ego-centered field from which he or she constructs an approach to students and teaching; the second is a set of relationships between the teacher and some particular students who respond to and justify that teacher's approach; and the third is the network or sum of all these fragmented approaches to teaching and students. The curriculum of either school is composed of the sum of all these disparate fields of individual teachers. The discussion examines the implications of such a fragmented and personalized curriculum.

A STUDY OF NETWORKS AMONG PROFESSIONAL STAFFS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS[1]

Philip A. Cusick[2]

Purpose and Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this study was to describe and explain network of relations among the professional staffs of two comprehensive secondary schools and to hypothesize about the effects of those networks on the curriculum. The concept of "network" has been popular since Barnes used it to analyze social relations in a parish in western Norway. He defined a network as "a set of points, some of which are joined by lines. The points of the image are people or sometimes groups, the lines indicate which people interact with each other. We can think of the whole of social life as generating a network of this kind." (Barnes, 1977).

The concept is useful for the social scientist trying to formulate an abstract idea of who interacts with whom in a particular place and how the characteristics and sum of the interactions affect behavior. It also may be useful for the individual in a specific place calculating his chances for extending his influence or gaining a desired reward. Both parties, the social scientist and the inside strategist, may be thinking of interactions, structure, and influence, but with different emphases, there are two quite separate concepts. The

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[2]Philip A. Cusick is a professor in the Department of Administration and Curriculum at Michigan State University.

former may be best expressed by retaining the term network, the latter expressed as a "field."

> A network is defined as the totality of all units connected by a certain type of relationship. A network has definite boundaries and is not egocentric. It subsumes all the activity fields of the constituent units; or to turn this around, the activity field of each unit encompasses some portion of the total network....I would like to reserve the term field to indicate an egocentric system. A field may be delineated by social, economic, political or other type of relationships....Thus an activity field of any given individual or group consists of all the units with which that individual or group maintains a certain type of relationship. (Jay, 1964, pp. 137-139)

While both meanings are concerned with structure and interactions, field specifies an egocentric entity, with a particular group or individual looking out from the center, while network denotes the sum of the fields within a certain place or type of relationship. For this study it is a particularly useful distinction because the method was such that the project began with exploring individual patterns of interaction, but the final emphasis was on the total network in each school.

A second important distinction concerns the importance of a "type of relationship" referred to above. Jay uses the term network with additional categorical concepts indicating type of relation and settings, that is, social, economic, political, hence lodging the action in specific places and filling out the description and analysis. But what many social scientists have in mind when they use the term network is the structure, per se, with its characteristics serving as the independent variables affecting behavior. As such, the action is not situated or predicated on additional conceptual frameworks. No one denies that people are bound by types of meaningful relation-

ships--family, group, community--but for these network researchers the emphasis is on the structural regularities and the effects of those regularities on behavior, not on the types of relationships within which the behavior takes place. These researchers "pay attention to the network...to the geometry of its arrangement, and not to the characteristics of things that net describes (Leinhart, 1977)." Their goal is to move beyond the concept of network as a mere metaphor by focusing on the ties in the structure, rather than the qualities of people, time and place. The alternative to their approach is the use of the term, network,

> as an eclectic bag of techniques for studying the details of individual variability around some basic ordering by categories and concrete organizations. We would like the reader to entertain instead the idea that the presently existing largely categorical descriptions of social structure have no solid theoretical grounding; furthermore network concepts may provide the only way to construct a theory of social structure. (White, Boorman, & Brieger, 1976, p. 732)

To these people the problem with social theory is that it remains wedded to such categorical imagery and primitive terms as role, group, society, and status, and the relationship of these categories to the structure remains tenuous. For them it is not categories expressed in primitive terms, but structure itself that determines behavior. We agreed that when the conceptual explanatory model is composed of primitive categorical concepts and structural, or in this case, a network concept, the imprecision of the former hinders an assessment of whether an individual piece of behavior can be explained in the social-psychological categories or by the structure. Such eclectic explanations do not assist one in progressing toward greater precision and specificity.

However, the problem with this is not only that one's position in a structure may not be sufficient to explain his behavior but also that

> tying mathematical definitions and postulates to structural constructs, while giving precision and power to the theory tend to oversimplify it. For reasons of mathematical convenience, one has to make simply assumptions which so restrict the theory that it may seem unrealistic compared to the complexity of observed human behavior. (French, 1956, p. 181)

For that reason, while using relations and structures as explanatory models remains a goal, most network studies have been undertaken with field methods. They have been of specific places such as factories, communities, and families and about the factory-ness, community-ness and conjugalness, as well as role, group, and status that serve as additional explanatory devices. While this reduces the power of the structural paradigm to explain the action, it does make the ensuing explanations more plausible. Such a strategy may not really move the term network beyond a metaphorical stage, but it is generally supported by the oft-quoted Barnes (1972).

> There is no such thing as a theory of social networks; perhaps there never will be. The basic idea behind both the metaphorical and the analytic uses of social networks --that the configuration of cross-cutting interpersonal bonds is in some unspecified way causally connected with the actions of these persons and with the social institutions of their society--remains a basic idea and nothing more. It constitutes what Homans calls an "orienting statement" rather than a theory with propositions that can be tested. (p. 2)

In keeping with the view represented by Barnes, we used the concept of network in presenting the structure as more than groups and dyads, but less than communities or organizations. To interpret and analyze this study's data in the form of narrative descriptions of interactions, necessitated using functional concepts and adding school setting and community.

Methodology

The field method elected for this study was a combination of participant observation and interview. Field or ethnographic methods have been increasingly considered legitimate for use in educational research, therefore a lengthy explanation and justification of the methods need not be elaborated upon. There are a number of methods for answering questions about human issues, and the task of the researcher is to select one or some combination that is compatible with the logic of the question. The logic is very simple. In going about their business, the staffs of secondary schools carry on school-related and nonschool-related interactions with one another in the lounge, halls, faculty offices, and elsewhere in the schools. This constant exchange is purposive to the running of the school and teachers' professional lives, and much of the business of the institution can be said to pass through it. As an entity, it warrants serious study.

The method extends from this line of thought. The task was to describe the interactions that went on in all the schools. The method had to allow a fluidity to follow the schools' events. What was required was (1) access to all parts of the school(s), (2) a personal familiarity with the staff or at least a large number of the staff, and (3) an acquaintance with the issues discussed. Hence the method was a combination of participant observation and interview that provided the access, the potential for familiarity, and the time to develop the acquaintance with the issues. We admit of course that any notion of describing all the interactions or the total network of the school or field of any single person was futile. But a participant observer, by virtue of

his presence in the situation is able to make judgments about the relevance of any event and thus discriminate the important from the trivial.

> In many ways, the best information is likely to be obtained through direct observation. The observer, over a period of time is able to make his own assessment of the interaction of an individual with others around him to record its characteristics. (Mitchell, 1969)

The Schools

The sample consisted of two comprehensive secondary schools in a northern United States industrial area, selected because personal friends served as assistant principals, although at the time of the study one of those friends had already been transferred to a junior high school as principal. While the selection was in no sense "random," it was not a given that the findings could be generalized to a larger set of secondary schools. Rather the purpose was to generate an explanation that would help hypothesize about the network of professionals in secondary schools. The sampling techniques were not random but theoretical:

> Theoretical sampling is done in order to discover categories and their properties, and to suggest their inter-interrelationships into a theory....Random sampling is not not necessary for theoretical sampling, either to discover relationships or to check out its existence in other groups....The researcher who generates theory need not combine random sampling when setting forth relationships among categories and properties. These relationships are suggested as hypotheses pertinent to direction of relationship, not tested as description of both direction and magnitude. (Glaser & Strauss, 1970, p. 106)

There is an assumption of generality of scope here (following the study), that what was observed under certain conditions will hold if those conditions are duplicated.

The study began in the first school in January 1979. Observa-

tion continued almost daily until the following June. At the same time a relationship with a staff member in the second school was nurtured. Observation at that school began the following September and continued until March 1980. The daily routine in either school consisted of observing classes, attending daily sessions in lounges and offices, interviewing teachers, attending many informal events both during and after school. From all the notes the final narrative with the ensuing explanation evolved.

While that describes standard behavior for any field worker, the question arises wherein does the researcher choose to observe and interview? In any environment with as many people as there were in those schools, a decision needed to be made whether to join some particular group(s) or clique(s), or whether to float through the system touching first one group, then another, and so on.

My choice is always to join with the few, but it does have its disadvantages. The first is that spending more time with a few means spending less time with many. The second is that these groups and cliques and sets have their own norms and behaviors, and once an outsider is permitted to join, he must respect and abide by those norms. This may and usually does further separate a researcher from many others whom he would like to contact. But in my experience, this "nesting" is always preferable except when the research questions plainly discourage it. This way the outsider has a home in the institution, an office to relax in, a group to lunch with, and some friends with whom to continue a long-ranging dialogue. The researcher is less a stranger and more an intimate and participant

in the place. Thus this researcher gained access to the deeper life and the meaning of behaviors of the institution, so that even if it makes one more reliant on inference to describe other parts of the setting, that inference is more plausible. To know a few people well and to share their understanding of life in that place is superior to knowning many people only peripherally.

In both schools I found some teachers who were not only interested and involved in most aspects of the school, but who shared some of my interests in politics, sports, and some limited social activities. With those I shared lunch, office space, and could engage in long, informative conversations. For purposes of the study, I wanted to avoid affiliating with the administrators (they did not constitute a group in either school). It would have been considered odd if I had chosen to join one of the several groups of women. There were a number of teachers who appeared to have almost no social ties in the school; one cannot really affiliate with those who do not affiliate. The job then became to maintain good relations with the people with whom I was most closely associated and with whom I therefore was most comfortable, while not simply taking their activities as indicative of the whole school. It was almost imperative to maintain the moral aspects of the good relations I enjoyed with those few, taking care not to violate personal matters, give scandal, or engage in gossip.

That the critics of the method(s) center their attacks on the researcher's role is as it should be, because that role, which is always unique, personal, and very sensitive is at the center of every such study. While it can be made plausible in the abstract,

it is difficult to explain and defend theoretically. The most oft-cited objections to the method(s) is that they are too subjective, too theoretically vague, and provide too little a base for generalization. But as Becker (1958) points out, the worthwhileness of the methods are not theoretically predetermined, but rather lie with the plausibility of the data as presented to the critical readers who may reject findings that seem laced with bias and whimsey (pp. 652-660).

The Setting

This study describes and explains the networks of relations among the staffs of two large secondary schools and attempts to determine the effect of those ineractions on the curriculum. It centers on two questions: What do staff people do together and how does what they do together relate to the curriculum?

One school, in a large community on the northern fringe of a metropolitan area, was distinctively suburban in character and served 1500 white students. The second, in the central part of a smaller industrial region, served 2,200 students, half of whom were white students, the other half were black. Both were high schools designed to give a diversified curriculum to a pluralistic constituency. The staff of 68 teachers in one school and 101 teachers in the other were divided into academic specialties. In the first school, in addition to five periods of instructing, each teacher was to do supervisory duty in the corridor, lavatory, cafeteria, or study hall for one period and had one preparation period and one lunch period. In the second school, the day was only five periods long and began at 7:30. At 12:50 the students went home, there being no lunch, activity, or cafeteria periods. This five period day had been adopted in the sixties by many urban schools as a response to racial violence.

Trouble had occurred where the students were allowed to come together outside the class (e.g., cafeteria, study halls, activities), so those times were simply eliminated from the day. At 1:00 p.m. the only students left were the varsity athletes, a few seeking extra help, or a few waiting in the lobby for friends.

Both schools were organized by department. The department was an administrative unit for scheduling and for allocating supplies and materials, but the chairperson had no supervisory authority relative to teachers, nor any more than a teacher relative to students. For that reason, while one enjoyed the benefits and the modest prestige, it was a limited position, held only at the pleasure of the principal.

Besides the students, teachers, and department chairmen, both schools had several administrators: two assistant principals in the first, three in the second, and of course, a principal in each school. Into their offices came an unending stream of students, each with a request for a pass, a late slip, an early leave slip, some disciplinary problem, tardiness, insolence, some altercation with a teacher or a student, a work or parking or physical checkup permit. Many of these required a follow up--a call to a parent, another teacher, the counselor or someone else in the organization. The administrators' working day consisted of this endless series of disconnected and isolated meetings.

The amount of administrative and supervisory time spent in attending to the needs of individual students helps emphasize an important point about both schools. To the degree that either of these schools had an educational philosophy, its main tenet was that the school was designed to be responsible to individual students. In fact, the

central tenet in the goals of the district of the second school was

> If children fail to develop and grow as we reasonably expect they should, the shortcomings or errors should be focused upon the structure of the system and the community, not upon the children....Children do not fail to learn, the school fails to teach.

In the first school the philosophy, although less specific, was still the foundation of the structure. The school was designed to serve the student and give him or her as many opportunities as possible to attain an education. At least until it became dangerous to other students (it rarely did), or when the student rejected every opportunity, the administrators tried to keep the student in school. That the schools were designed to be responsive to individual students meant that administrative time was spent on attending to individual students. So the administrators' time was not spent on program development, coordination, supervision, or evaluation. It follows that not only did the administrators value more highly those teachers who could "get along with kids" and thus not burden the office with additional problems, but also that teachers were more or less left to their own resources as to how to conduct themselves in the classroom. It is this latter point from which we wish to begin our description of teachers and their networks.

Findings

This section, in an abbreviated form, presents some of the general description of teacher networks in the school. The amount of information presented is adequate to warrant the model that developed from the description. For purposes of this brief article, information these schools will be generalized freely rather than tracing differ-

ences that existed. The schools were not identical: One was large, urban, and biracial; the other was smaller, suburban, and Caucasion. However, the focus is on what teachers did together and how that affected the curriculum: This did not appear to differ in either school.

So far the setting and structure described contain the basic patterns of most comprehensive high schools and the administrative efforts that are devoted to the all-important tasks of attendance and discipline. Add to that a departmental structure, that was not much more than a loose confederation, existing to order and distribute supplies and assign classes, and a central office that was distant and busy with issues of a different nature. The sum of all this and the center of the proposed model is that the teachers in either school, after being given their scheduled assignments, were free to develop the pattern of accommodation and the approach to curriculum that suited them. The task here is to explain those accommodations in terms of fields and networks.

Individual Teachers Create the Curriculum

The accommodations were quite different for each teacher. Each could find a way to teach that fit his or her own style, background, opinions, predilections, inclinations or such, and justify it in terms of being "good for kids." Some stressed writing, some personal relations, and some deportment. Some assigned homework, some did not; some spoke to students in a teenage jargon, some upheld formal standards of speech. Some put normative compliance into their jobs and made them the centers of their lives, others gave considerably less and put their involvement into their families, second jobs or avocations. There was no standard way to behave relative to the curriculum or the students.

Teachers emphasized what they wanted to emphasize. One who cared about philosophy created an elective course in philosophy and nurtured it to the point where he taught three classes of it each term. The philosophy that he taught was that of Aristotle and Plato because that interested him. But it would have been equally acceptable for him to teach Locke, Berkeley, and Hume. He did what he wanted to do. A social studies teacher who tried to develop a course on geography, which was his major, was not successful. Now, by his own admission he "gets a map into every social studies lesson he has" and in effect teaches geography. Another teacher taught social studies and was interested in the stock market. He developed two economics classes, the focus of which became reading and studying stock tables, purchasing stocks in a few local companies, studying the accompanying financial data, and, when possible, attending Board of Directors meetings. The stock profits were used for the trips, while the teacher absorbed the losses by re-purchasing the stock from the students. An English teacher loved music, put on musical performances and worked as a promoter for some local agents. He created an elective called "Music as Expression" where he played Bach, the Beatles, the Beach Boys, black street poets, and all the music he liked. The program consisted of listening, studying lyrics, and writing about those lyrics. He referred to his class as "relevant" and interesting" and was proud of having the "most popular elective class in this school." According to him, the course "was what the kids related to and needed," and "in the music was an important message for that bi-racial school." While some other English teachers might quietly disparage "what he calls English," that was not sufficient to deter him.

There was a teacher hired to teach business math who had become interested in computers. He arranged a class in computer programming and begged or borrowed a keypunch and card sorter. He sold candy between classes to earn money for some small computers, four of which he purchased after two years. He arranged with the central office to use its data processing equipment one afternoon a week and had his line into the large computer in the Intermediate District. In effect, he created his own curriculum in response to his own interests.

This last teacher was an interesting case because he exemplified what so many others did in combining different resources to support their classes. He contacted outside agencies for support, sold candy in school to raise the money, did his own installation and repairs, recruited the interested students and convinced the administrators of the worthwhileness of the endeavor. He put together what appeared to be a very credible introduction to programming and in doing so gradually deserted his original assignment, which was to teach typing and business math.

This entrepreneurial approach to teaching or to the creation of curriculum was the rule, not the exception in these schools. A biology teacher was an avid outdoorsman so a good part of his classes was devoted to stream and wildlife ecology. An American history teacher in the second school was particularly interested in the Second World War in which he had served. He started a "war games" club, and with the funds that he and the students raised, bought some expensive games. Then he channeled the energy from the war games club into an elective class called "Second World War" which was subscribed for two sections.

No Fixed Curriculum

This phenomenon of teachers individually creating the curriculum can be simply explained. In neither school was there a fixed curriculum that one took for four years. A student in either had to accumulate 14 credits in the tenth through the twelfth grades. Included in the 14 were a credit in math, one in science, three in English, one in U.S. History, one in social studies and one-half credit in government. That meant there were six and one-half open credits, giving teachers room to create electives that they wanted. Even within the required courses there were a great many ways one could fulfill the 14. One could take poetry, writing, speech, remedial reading, Shakespeare, or grammar and composition, each of which could be counted as one English credit. The students were in fact free to choose from among a great many offerings to accumulate either their required or their elective credits.

The second impetus to this system was the general philosophy of the school that teachers had to get along with and be responsive to kids and live within the constraints of a structure that isolated teachers in their rooms, without contact from colleagues or scrutiny from supervisors. The way teachers "got along with kids" was to follow their own predilections and inclinations with assurance that unless there was trouble with students, or worse, parents, their efforts would go unscrutinized. This combination of isolation from colleagues and hency collegial influence, the lack of scrutiny, the necessity of getting along with kids, and an open elective system where teachers had to appeal to students, encouraged a situation wherein a teacher was expected to create an individualized approach with which the teacher and his or her students were comfortable. What most influenced the

curriculum of either school was not some formal organizational arrangement or set of collegial understandings, but the teacher's individualized field from whence came his or her approach.

Teaching Often A Second Job

Most of those mentioned gave normative compliance to the school, put a great deal of time and effort into teaching, and took teaching as their sole occupation. Some, however, had other occupations besides teaching. Some teachers raised families, ran private businesses, worked for other companies, did part-time skilled work or had a serious avocation that was, at least in part, run for profit. In addition to those outside jobs, some teachers had an equal number of inside jobs. Some teachers coached sports, drama, and so on; served as department chairmen; worked or taught co-op, taught evening school, served as system-wide department chairpersons; were athletic or activities directors or did extra work for the athletic departments.

Teachers having two jobs is not discussed much in educational literature, yet it is an important matter, one able to affect the curriculum. Since I argue that the strongest force in the curriculum is the teacher's individual field, then a time-consuming and serious job can powerfully influence the curriculum, particularly if it infringes on school time.

That some teachers conducted second jobs on school time demonstrates the potential freedom any single teacher has in the schools, a freedom to proceed in his or her classes without interference from colleagues or supervisors. Teachers could, in effect, follow their own predilections, taking their cues from whatever constituted their relevant fields. A teacher's approach to teaching was not developed

or carried on within a formal or collegial network; rather it sprang from the teacher's own relationships, background, personal opinions, outside constraints and so on, which I will call the teacher's "field."

One of the questions I asked teachers was, "How do you decide to do what you do in the classroom?" They would usually begin by citing the department-approved texts, but invariably the differences of opinion as to how to handle classes and what to emphasize would emerge. The differences came from a whole host of background elements in the individuals' lives. The teacher of philosophy talked philosophy all the time. He had a strong Catholic background, read philosophy in his spare time, and had strong opinions about the importance of taking his "examined life" perspective into his students' lives. His field included his background, his church ties, likes, opinions, education, experience, and personal way of relating to students. All were combined into his classroom approach. What teachers did in their classrooms did not depend on the structure or contacts within the school; these were insufficiently compelling to offset one's own field. A French teacher in the first school took over French III when it had three students and, with hard work, built it up to twenty-three students, a noteworthy enrollment in an advanced foreign language class. She taught a sixth hour of French IV, took the students to Quebec, took as many as she could to France, had a club that went to French restaurants in the area, had French dinners for the club in which all the students cooked French-style foods and spoke French during the evening. She spent her evenings studying and reading for her class. When asked why, she replied, "Because I want to make French an exciting place. I want the kids to say, 'French is a good subject to take; it's fun and exciting.' I want it to be the best

class in the school." "But why," I asked. "Because I want them to love French, and so on." Always when I pressed the question of why, these teachers, who by their own admission and the admission of other teachers and administrators gave a great deal to the school, replied that they did it because they wanted to. The particulars of their approach to curriculum came from their own background, in or out of school.

The biology teacher was the state president of a conservation society and hunted and fished all the time, often with students and former students. He took his interest in forests and streams into the classroom. Everything came together for him: his interest in biology, avocations, public service, teaching and liking of students. His main life interests all meshed into his teaching. To the question, "Why do you do what you do in the classroom and take the approach you take?" he would verbally construct this egocentric field where teaching as he taught was extended from and intertwined with a host of other elements in his life.

A serious and well-respected speech teacher was a good example of field influencing what is taught. The teacher was assigned to the English department, taught speech, and ran the debate club into which he put the kind of time and commitment that is typical of dedicated debate teachers. But his approach to his speech classes was unique. Students were obligated to give three or four speeches a term, one on their academic life, one on their future, and two on something else. But the teacher was most proud of the fact that students got up and talked about the most difficult events in their personal lives. He was proud of "this little white girl who talked about how she baby-sat for this neighbor who raped her repeatedly over a period of six weeks and how she was afraid to say anything about it because he

threatened her...and you should have seen those black kids respond to her, and those black boys telling her that if he tried to do anything like that again just to tell them and they'd 'Fix him.'"

When he spoke of his efforts to teach "an English elective for kids who can't read," he was pleased with their openness with one another, of the affection that came through to one who had told of his or her plight, of how his elective was one of the best subscribed classes in the school, of how, though he was white, his clientele was almost entirely black "except for a few strong whites," and how what the kids needed most "was someone who understands where they're coming from and who can talk to them."

The content of his class was only tangentially speech or forensics; rather, it was an elucidation of the students' lives, or as he put it, "where the kids are at." That was his major goal: to get them to articulate their lives, particularly the seamier side, and empathize with one another, particularly across the racial barrier. In his opinion, that was the way to teach school to "these kids."

From this gentleman and others who took an equally unique approach to curriculum, I tried to get an answer to the question, "Why do you stress this rather than any number of other things?" His answer was stated in terms of belief that "this is important," "this is where they're at," "this is what they need," "this is what they relate to," "this is good for kids," "I'm getting them ready for life." Another teacher had spent some considerable time and energy organizing a set of activities to raise money for a girl stricken with a kidney disease. When asked why he did it he replied, "If a need like that isn't what we're here for, I don't know what is." Of course, no teacher ever subjected his beliefs to faculty consensus. Each made simple state-

ments of his or her own values concerning students, schooling, and his or her own role in the process. No one, of course, knew whether students <u>really</u> needed this or that particular approach. Indeed there was no mechanism to even address the question. A teacher might just as well have been doing what <u>she</u> or <u>he</u> really needed as well as what the students really needed. All that mattered in the sense of justifying one's approach was a set of students from whom the particular approach elicited an acceptable response.

Stressing the uniqueness of each teacher's approach may appear to be overemphasized here, but in fact is not, as will be seen. Both schools had an established curriculum, and both had a set of procedures for altering that curriculum. One school had an assistant principal for curriculum. If a teacher wanted to initiate a new course, then he or she went to the assistant principal with the idea, further developed the course with that principal's cooperation, and depended on the principal to work that course into the curriculum. In the second school there was a building department structure, a system-wide department structure, and a curriculum committee run by the director of secondary education. A new offering, a change in texts, or the removal of a course went through a process that might take some months and received careful scrutiny, particularly from the system-wide curriculum committee. Also, the schools were allocated a certain number of teachers based on the number of students. It was then the principal's task (in one school) or the assistant principal's (in the second) to schedule the curriculum with what staff was available. These procedures were fairly orderly, and from our observation, were well followed in both places.

However, even with these formal procedures, the point still stands. While the curriculum in either school may be referred to as "standard," nothing was standard about it. Beyond the basic subjects, which teachers also approached freely and with little supervision or collegial advice, the curriculum was a compilation of all the diverse efforts of individual teachers, past and present. That this curriculum stands published does not mean that there is some system-wide rationale or even school-wide collective understanding of the appropriateness of some or all of the curriculum. Any change, any innovation, still came from individuals following their own predilections. The energy that altered the curriculum was always generated from individuals, not the structure. If no teachers wanted to change anything, neither the curriculum committee nor that assistant principal took the initiative. Curriculum changes depended on individual teachers.

The diversity of curriculum effort stemmed also from the lack of coordination, control, supervision, and standardization. If a course was entered into the curriculum, years could go by, and no one would ever ask "what is happening in that class?" While there was the appearance of some curriculum uniformity, the real basis of the curriculum was the individual teacher following his or her egocentric predilections. In neither school was there any compulsion to work together to formulate a uniform approach to teaching, or a standard way to relate to students, or some opinion as to what was or was not acceptable behavior for either students or teachers.

This is the main reason why the focus of the study changed. As originally stated, the purpose of the study was "to describe and explain the human networks that intervene between the stated and pursued goals of two secondary schools, and the activities, instruc-

tional and otherwise, that take place as a result of those stated and pursued goals." However, the original focus depended upon there actually being some goals and some process by which the faculty worked through and attained these goals. Programmatic or curricular activities did not occur through faculty discussion and consensus. The schools did not operate that way. The sum of the forces I have discussed--the schedule; the lack of supervision (or better yet, the taking up of supervisory time with student discipline); the isolation of teachers in the classroom; the lack of common values among teachers about student behavior, achievement, appropriate educational goals, standard opinions of curriculum, or what was "good for the kids," combined to fragment any bid for consensus. Yet, at the same time, no force served to build consensus. To build a continuing consensus would have required purposeful activity, teacher recruitment with value consensus in mind, a great deal of time and effort and perhaps a less diverse environment, none of which existed. So teachers were free to go off, build their own approaches to classes and curriculum, their own ways of relating to students, and were able to justify their actions in their own terms. Schedule, room arrangement, and the requirement that some sequence of courses be taken made the school appear more uniform than it was. Underneath that very thin uniformity was great diversity; correspondingly, no mechanism existed to create uniformity out of that diversity.

At one point in the study I wanted to say that the teachers all liked the students, or at least, they said they did and that this "liking" served as the main motivator. But it was not that simple. While they spoke of the generalized "kids," they always meant a very select set of individual students for whom they worked and from whom they evoked the kind of response they wanted.

In fact each teacher had two important fields. The first was that interpersonal and egocentric set of forces from which a teacher created his or her approach to teaching and students. The second was composed of a set of students--real students, past or present, for whom his or her particular approach worked. Some teachers spoke of the academically inclined, some spoke of the poorer and/or less able, some spoke of those who left school and were doing well in college or in the community; some spoke of those who had become genuine friends, or who reminded the teacher of herself or himself at a younger age. Each teacher maintained some "set of students," for whom his or her approach worked, students who responded affectively to him and who, in effect, justified his or her unique approach to the job. The second "field" justified the first field.

Teacher-to-Teacher or Teachers with Other Teachers

I have not yet described what is the subject of most network studies: the interactions of participants, in this case, teachers with other teachers. While the assertion made here is that it is not the interpersonal networks as much as the egocentric fields that one has to study in order to understand the curriculum, many opportunities exist in school for teachers to interact. When talking about teacher to teacher interaction, innumerable interactions have to be sifted through to try to winnow out those that seem to have something to do with school as an educational organization. I observed and recorded those interactions that were stable and enduring, assuming that their stability and endurance were evidence that they served some purpose.

First is the departmental structure. Within the departments people taught in proximity to one another, shared the same office,

decided on texts and supplies, and arranged schedules. Within this structure innumerable interactions took place. For many, the department was the strongest source of personal and professional ties. But it had definite limits. The department chairman did not supervise or evaluate, neither did he or she enter another's classroom uninvited. Within a department teachers did not openly comment on or criticize another's tyle or choice of materials or challenge another's opinion on some pedagogical matter. While an important source of coordination and socialization, the departments did not extend beyond the corridors into the classrooms.

There was a good example of this in the first school. A districtwide attempt was made to have the English department in the four high schools address more directly grammar and composition for freshmen and sophomores. The program, which was in its third year, was originated and implemented by the districtwide English chairperson and two department chairpersons, one of whom was in the first school. The program provided not only guidelines for instruction but also a fairly elaborate series of pre- and posttests. But after three years, the district director of secondary education, busy with the building and with hiring, paid little attention to it. The building principal paid no attention to it and had never inspected the elaborate testing program. The people who initiated it were no longer in coordinating positions; two of them had become administrators. The English departments in two other high schools paid almost no attention to it; its use and implementation was being left more and more to the discretion of individual teachers. In effect, some interested people created it and pushed it as far as they could. Then, when they left or lost interest, the program remained in name only.

The other departments were not much different, except in social studies and physical education. The social studies department had some fairly new teachers who shared materials and ideas for their classes, attended after-hour events, and showed a high level of interest in student activities. One coached cheerleaders, another pom pom girls; another sponsored an activities assembly to raise money for a stricken student, and all were active in other events. As teachers who actively pursued their own interest, one had started a course in international relations, another several courses in sociology, another a course in psychology. Each developed his/her class, recruiting students, and working the class into the curriculum.

When the department chairperson and some other members of the department did not support their efforts to increase electives, these teachers simply went around them and had their courses approved by the principal. When their efforts at recuiting students for their advanced electives resulted in one member of the department being left with five classes of ninth-grade civics, then that was too bad. That person railed against the system which apportioned classes unfairly, but he had done nothing to protect himself.

The department served the individual teachers; the teachers did not serve the department. When a teacher whom the advanced biology teacher did not respect was assigned to teach elementary biology, he went to the principal and argued that the department did not want that individual. But when in that same department the chairperson wanted some cooperation for a departmental inservice, that same biology teacher refused to cooperate and refused to attend the agreed upon activity. When he wanted to use the department to protect his biology, he used it. When it was inconvenient, he ignored it with impunity.

When the coaches wanted increased supplies, they went to the department chairperson and argued as a department; when there was an attempt to get them to participate in a departmental inservice designed to add some skills to their repertoire, they stayed in their men coaches' locker room all morning. The department, as an entity, was extremely weak relative to the strength of the individual teachers' fields.

As we stated, there were stable and purposive interactions all over those schools between teachers, and these purposive interactions were intended to extend and protect the field of each individual, but, at the same time, were not allowed to intrude upon that field.

Our model is composed first of *a background field* from which stems one's approach to the task of instructing students; a second field is composed of *the teacher and some students,* for whom that teacher's approach is considered to be "good;" and finally, a third field or network, composed of *the teacher and his colleagues,* which one joins in order to create, extend, or protect the initial field.

Teacher and Colleagues

There are two types of networks.

The first is composed of those interactions representing an undisguised attempt by a person to build a support system for his activity. For example, the newspaper sponsor purposively cultivated the principal, the activities director, an individual in the central office who had access to some copy machines, and another teacher who helped her students with camera work--all of whom she needed in order to sustain her newspaper. Another teacher, the yearbook sponsor, cultivated the principal, the activities director, and a vice principal for support and thus built a network to protect her yearbook. Further,

two coaches, who created and team-taught a course in fitness for varsity athletes, cooperated with one another in the curriculum (one of few instances), but it was still their own personal initiative and energy that created and sustained this successful class.

The second network consists of informal interactions in which teachers take genuine pleasure in one another's company. Over the course of their interactions the informal associations themselves become an important part of one's field. For example, a group of males--two teachers, a guidance counselor, and the athletic director--went out to lunch every day and had been doing so for years. The friendship and camaraderie that went with that luncheon were important elements in their professional lives and were actually the reason that two of them had stayed working in that school. For the former, we can indicate the yearbook sponsor, who cultivated the principal, cultivated the activities director, and a vice principal for support and thus built a network to protect her yearbook. Another group of men in the office adjacent to the industrial arts area liked one another and in the fashion of long time associates, discussed one another's personal lives, drank together on Friday night, fished and hunted together, helped one another build a garage, pour cement, or finish basements. For them, regular association, every morning before school, every fifth hour every day, and every Friday evening, was important to having a satisfactory life in that school.

While we have not yet moved beyond the idea of egocentric circles, there are individuals who have, not one set of support colleagues, but many, because their in-school field is more active and complex. W. sponsors an activity and coaches, so he associates with the athletic

director and others. He initiated a new class, so he seeks out the principal; he socializes with other teachers, so he attends the Friday sessions in the bar; and, in addition, he was brought up and lives in the community. Because of his involvement he is sought out, in turn, by the activities director for assistance on another activity, by the principal to serve on a committee, and by the athletic director for extra work if he wants it. He has many sets of colleagues all over the school. His is a complex social environment.

Another teacher was hired to teach one class of physical science, chemistry, and some ninth-grade science, but decided that he preferred physical science. Through working on the class, recruiting more students, and garnering the support of the principal, he now has one class of chemistry and four of physical science. But he has no friends in the school, is on no committees, and attends no more than two evening activities a year demanded by the contract. For him the school is considerably less complex. But the same principle holds. Both teachers moved into the social life of the school and created networks of relations in order to enhance their fields.

All these internal groups and associates were created by the individual teachers for personal reasons; these groups are not structurally maintained or rewarded. Membership in any group was open and voluntary. One could as well join in the 4th and 5th hour euchre club in the lunch room, as he could the group in the industrial arts area, the teachers in the non-smoking lunch session, the special-education teachers group, the group in the bar on Friday afternoon, or one could--even were he not a coach--make the men's physical education office his hangout if he liked and wanted to talk sports, or he could create his set of support people whom he needed for his

favorite project. All of the associations were fluid and non-exclusive, open to any one who availed himself, wanted to join and would take part regularly. If one chose not to join this or that set, or none at all, he or she received no sanction. Associations designed for curricular ends and those designed for non-curricular ends shared the common genesis and existed because someone cared to exert the effort and engage in the activity.

It was never the case that membership in one of these entities affected membership in another. An individual could be a member of a department, a lunch or card group, and a coach of some sport, but none of what she or he did in one, related to or affected what he did in another.

The school then was composed of serialized and segmented sets of interactions, individually and purposefully initiated and maintained to fulfill some personal need, either to extend one's teaching approach or provide a fuller life. These associations were open and accessible, and membership in one did not preclude or affect membership in another, nor were they allowed to intrude into one's own way of dealing with students and teaching. In fact, in none of those informal or formal sets was there ever any generalized discussion of or search for consensus on the best way to deal with students.

Now this certainly constitutes a network, but a certain type of network. A network implies a certain amount of cross-membership with associations of one kind implying associations of a second kind. I did not find that. What characterized the associations, both those that were purposively designed to extend one's field, or those that were designed to fill out one's personal life, were each isolated

from the others. One might be a member of two or more groups, but there was no overall pattern, that, knowing a teacher's membership in some groups, helped to predict membership in other groups. For that reason, I characterized the teacher network as a segmented set of discrete, single-purpose entities.

For the principals of either school, their schools were composed of these sets of relationships, but for them, the relationships were not discrete. The principals, because they administered the schedule, additional assignments, and unallocated resources, controlled just those things that many teachers wanted in order to fill out their fields. The principals could award a department chairpersonship; a free first, fifth, or eighth hour; a favorite class; a double lunch period; an honors section, or support for a new activity. Particularly in the first school, to the degree that he could, the principal awarded, within the bounds of the contract, those people who, in return, gave him support with his job. What he wanted most was for teachers to enter into the spirit of the school and to support its diverse activities and events. After all, he was in the position of having to demonstrate to a paying public that the school was a viable entity, and the evidence for that consisted of the diverse and interesting projects that individual teachers had initiated. The gifted program, a winning team, a quality newspaper, an innovative science program, a good debate club, or a well attended senior play were the items that made good public relations, pleased the public and the central office administrators.

So the principal valued most highly those teachers whose activities assisted him with the all-important task of presenting that building in a favorable light to the public. In addition, there were innumerable

times when he needed additional help with some event, and he valued and attempted to reward the people who would respond to a call for help at a football game or dance or help sponsor some lesser activity. It was those people that he attempted to help with their favored project in exchange for support on his projects.

Given the limits of dealing with a tenured, contracted, mature faculty, many of whom had as much of their energy allocated to outside activities as to the school, the principal really did not have very much in the way of power or rewards to dispense. He could neither hire nor fire, promote nor demote, pay more nor less, give fewer nor more than the contractually agreed upon number of classes. What he could do was support their private versions of the job, and he did it in exchange for cooperation with his pet projects. We could understand the criticisms from those who said he "played favorites," but as he saw it, he was using what little he had to create some semblance of unity from this set of vastly disparate endeavors.

From his position, and to some extent for the activities or athletic directors, the word "network" meant something. They were involved in numerous activities, and what occurred in one would affect what occurred in another. But for the others on the staff, there remained their private fields; what forays they made into the social interaction of the school did not go beyond their individual interests.

If one were willing to do just as the contract stated, and wanted no extra funds or the better classes or any favored schedule or a free first or eighth hour, if one were content with fifth-period cafeteria duty and five classes of ninth-grade general math or civics,

neither the principal nor anyone else would have any power over that teacher. But if a teacher wanted more than that--and everyone whom I met did--then he or she had to enter into the general social arena of the school and cultivate what relationships were necessary in order to get what he or she wanted.

There were few opportunities for carving out a favored position in the second school with its straight five-period day and a lack of funds, which denied many of the extra activities, sports, clubs, or trips. In this school, though, teachers talked a great deal about when they attended events together and went beer drinking afterwards, the "old days" in the "old school" when people supported each other, when they ate together and socialized and knew each other's children. Strong friendships still existed, some teachers still hunted and fished together, and a year-end corn party was held, but because of the severe financial conditions at the school, fewer opportunities existed for interaction in the school. People there were even more likely, when they finished talking about the "old days," to leave by themselves for their distant homes and families, and whatever activities they maintained outside.

Summary and Implications

In this field study, I attempted to trace the networks among the teaching staffs in two comprehensive secondary schools and determine the effects of those networks on the curriculum. These two schools, with their comprehensiveness, curriculum, architecture, size, staff selection procedures, and organizational structure, certainly do embody the major characteristics of most public secondary schools, although they are not archetypal secondary schools. A theoretical model, constructed from the data, dichotomized the term "network" to include (1) an egocentric field, and (2) a network or aggregate of

all the staff relationships. The model suggests that the important element in the construction of curriculum is the individual teacher's personal field from which he or she constructs an approach to students and teaching. A second, equally egocentric field is composed of each teacher and some students who respond or have responded to that teacher's approach, and finally, a set of relations that one may build with other staff to either protect that personal approach or to enrich one's life. This third aspect is also egocentric except for someone like the principal who has to consider the effects of any action on many teachers' personal fields. At that point one may think of a school in terms of a total network. From a functionalist perspective, one could suggest that those staff members behaved that way because of a system that left them unsupervised but in the company of students for almost the entire day with the principal requirement being that they "get along with kids." In response they developed these personal approaches to teaching and the aggregate of these approaches was the basis of the curriculum. In sum, the network structure was composed of highly diverse, segmented and egocentric fields.

While from this descriptive study of only two schools one has to be careful about implications, it is in order to generate implications that one undertakes a field study. Therefore, there are a few points I would like to discuss.

The most serious are the questions that this study raises about the position of the organization relative to the individual. Given this study, it is hard to understand why so many critics insist that our secondary schools are either "monolithic or sterile" (save in a certain drabness of architecture) and why there are continuing efforts to get schools to further release control of students (Carnegie Council of Policy Studies in Higher Education, 1979, p. 24).

In the first school, one could choose from among 168 courses, in the second, from 250. In addition, each school offered coop, work study, independent study, experimental programs, night school, shared programs with the local community college, special education, and an area career center for additional vocational training. In the first school, half to two-thirds of the juniors and seniors left as early as 10:45 a.m. to go to their paying jobs; in the second school everyone went home at 12:50.

Given the emphasis on satisfying individual student needs, the elective system with its few standard requirements and the numerous ways that even those few standards could be excepted, the absence of supervision by administrators or colleagues, the strict attention to student rights, and the following of quasi-legalistic procedures for solving minor disputes, it seemed to me that both the school administrators and the schools as collectives long ago gave up any suggestion that it was their role to decide on curricular matters and simply turned the responsibility over to individual teachers and students, allowing each to follow his or her own predilections.

It follows that the strength of the institution is left dependent on individual teachers offering quality programs to interested students, the teacher subcontracting his assignments, the students subcontracting for their education. But there are at least two problems that this raises. The first is that, while the autonomy that teachers enjoy may encourage a very high effort from some, any given individual may retain his job for years while doing little and putting his efforts into other endeavors. The second problem is that for those students who are either motivated and mature or who have some firm adult guidance, there is a quality education to be

had in either school. But there is nothing to prevent those who lack the sophistication, maturity, or guidance from slipping through the system without even the rudiments of an education. The individual, whether teacher or student, confronts such a system on his or her own.

A second and related issue is the neglect of the school collective as an educative entity. One might consider Durkheim's view that the school's important function is to prepare the child for social responsibility and that it is done by creating a school atmosphere in which one is expected to restrain his individual passions in favor of the collective good, live up to some fairly clear norms of behavior and achievement and thereby learn the habits of social responsibility. The important element is not the development of an individual according to his or her needs but the school as

> a social means to a social end--the means by which a society guarantees its own survival. The teacher is society's agent, the critical link in cultural transmission. It is his task to create a social or moral vein. Through the teacher, society creates man in its image. That, says Durkheim, is the task, the glory of education. It is not merely a matter of allowing an individual to develop in accordance with his nature, disclosing whatever hidden capacities lie there only waiting to be revealed. Education creates a new being. (Durkheim, 1961, pp. xi-xii)

Not only would Durkheim's school be better equipped to teach the virtues of moral and social responsibility, but the collective ethic would serve as an added incentive for individual effort. Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, Oaston, and Smith (1979) in their study suggesting that teachers and students are likely to work harder and achieve more in schools where there is a collective agreement on appropriate behavior and collectively enforced standards, affirmed what private school advocates have long known: It is hard to justify a demanding curriculum to a student when one's only argument is based on a

utilitarian individualism. One has no answer to the student who when asked to undertake difficult tasks asks, "Why should I?" if both teacher and student understand that it is only the "I" that counts. But if there is some collective understanding that, "This is the way we behave here," the question is less likely to be asked.

In sum, it seems that while in either of these two schools there were some very high quality efforts by teachers, and hence some excellent opportunities for assertive students, this study raises some serious questions about the neglect of the school collective as either a motivating, rewarding, and supporting entity or as a pedagogical means to teaching social responsibility. But to attend to those issues one would first have to confront the reality expressed by the "loosely coupled" metaphor, and be prepared to reject its notion that there are very good political and financial reasons for maintaining a very open, politicized "uncontrolled and uninspected," individualized system of secondary schools.

> Schools less often control their instructional activities or outputs, despite periodic shifts toward "accountability." They avoid this kind of control for two reasons. First, close supervision of instructional activity and outputs can uncover inconsistencies and inefficiencies and can create more uncertainty than mere abstract and unenforced demands for conformity to bureaucratic rules. Second, in the United States centralized governmental and professional controls are weak. Schools depend heavily on local funding and support. Maintaining only nominal central control over instructional outputs and activities also maintains societal consensus about the abstract ritual classifications by making local variations in the content and effectiveness of instructional practices invisible. (Meyer & Rowan, 1978, p. 80)

Meyer and Rowan argue, quite correctly, that the school "organizations integrate themselves by incorporating wider institutional structures as their own" (p. 81). Hence one can see a healthy func-

tional relationship between the inner workings of a school as described here and the realities of politics, funding procedures, teacher unions, and the pluralistic constituency.

But, however appealing, this type of functional explanation does have some problems. As Hempel (1965) points out:

> For sake of objective testability of functionalist hypotheses, it is essential, therefore, that definitions of needs or functional prerequisities be supplemented by reasonably clear and objectively applicable criteria of what is to be considered a healthy state or a normal working order of the systems under consideration; and that the vague and sweeping notion of survival then be construed in the relativized sense of survival in a healthy state as specified. (p. 321)

The question may not be whether the school will simply "survive" in some generalized sense, but whether by continuing to fragment its process, it can survive in some healthy state as an educative entity.

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